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(54) **Acidic amylaceous fermented composition for reducing the fermented milk and/or fruit content in foodstuffs.**

(57) Fermented milk products and/or fruit material in foodstuffs can be either simultaneously or separately reduced by adding to said foodstuffs an acidic amylaceous fermented composition resulting from a process wherein

- a) a slurry of cereal flour and at least one additional non-cereal starch material is first subjected to gelatinization and further homogenized;
- b) inoculated with an acidifying strain or a mixture of acidifying strains selected from Lactobacillus species, Streptococcus thermophilus and Bifidobacterium species;
- c) then subjected to a fermentation over a period and at a temperature such as to afford a pH of about 3.5 to 4.2 of the fermented material; and
- d) finally stabilized.

Composition useful therefor and foodstuffs containing same.

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The invention relates to a new process for reducing either simultaneously or separately the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in foodstuffs containing fermented milk products and/or fruit material.

The invention further relates to a composition useful for reducing the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in those foodstuffs as well as solid, semi-solid or liquid foodstuffs containing same.

Following the evolution of consumers tastes or their needs, or based on mere economical reasons such as lowering manufacture costs, the food industry is permanently looking for new natural and acceptable food materials. These new materials can consist to either newly discovered ingredients or new mixtures of, at least partially, prior known food ingredients.

Fermented milk products are widely used and appreciated by the consumers, but in some countries where agriculture or milk industry is deficient shortage or high prices can be an obstacle. To ensure an adequate supply of similar food products which will keep their main characteristics such as taste, viscosity or appearance, despite a reduced content of fermented milk products, the man in the art has to develop new solutions.

Although lactic fermentation is known since long, its mains use is dairy food products. In a few cases, however, lactic fermentation was also applied to non-dairy products such as cereals or cereal based food materials.

WO-A- 91/17672 discloses a food product containing dietary fiber and a method for making same. This method comprises lactic fermentation, based substantially on cereal bran, and leads to a presumed nutritionally beneficial and tasty product which further contains living microorganisms. The method provides more specifically an easy-to-use fiber rich food product including a significant amount of living Lactobacilli. Obviously, such a product would not cope with the aim of the invention.

GB-A-2092878 refers to a process for producing African native beer which comprises fermenting a liquid cereal extract to which has been added dairy whey. The resulting beverage, once conveniently sterilized and packed, is then used as such: it is defined as nourishing, non-alcoholic, pleasant tasting, shelf-stable and refreshing.

There is in fact no indication or suggestion that such solid or liquid food products would meet the goals defined here above.

The invention precisely provides one of these new and original solutions the food industry is looking for, when proposing to make use of an acidic amylaceous fermented composition based on various cereal flours and other starch materials.

It has been surprisingly discovered that one can easily and cheaply reduce either simultaneously or separately the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in a wide range of foodstuffs essentially based on said fermented milk products or fruit material according to their initial recipe, without affecting their genuine characteristics.

Therefore, a first object of the present invention is a process for reducing either simultaneously or separately the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in foodstuffs containing fermented milk products and/or fruit material, which comprises adding thereto an acidic amylaceous fermented composition resulting from a process wherein

- a) a slurry of cereal flour and at least one additional non-cereal starch material is first subjected to gelatinization and further homogenized;
- b) inoculated with an acidifying strain or a mixture of acidifying strains selected from Lactobacillus species, Streptococcus thermophilus and Bifidobacterium species;
- c) then subjected to a fermentation over a period and at a temperature such as to afford a pH of about 3.5 to 4.2 of the fermented material; and
- d) finally stabilized.

A further object is a composition useful for reducing either simultaneously or separately the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in foodstuffs containing fermented milk products and/or fruit material, which consists of an acidic amylaceous fermented composition resulting from a process wherein

- a) a slurry of cereal flour and at least one additional non-cereal starch material is first subjected to gelatinization and further homogenized;
- b) inoculated with an acidifying strain or a mixture of acidifying strains selected from Lactobacillus species, Streptococcus thermophilus and Bifidobacterium species;
- c) then subjected to a fermentation over a period and at a temperature such as to afford a pH of about 3.5 to 4.2 of the fermented material; and
- d) finally stabilized.

A third object of the invention is a foodstuff comprising fermented milk products and/or fruit material and a composition as defined here above.

According to the present invention, as cereal flour subjected to acidic fermentation one can advantageously use rice flour, wheat flour, oat flour or barley flour e.g., or any mixture thereof depending on the nature of the final product. Rice flour is preferred as leading to a fermented material having a neutral taste.

According to the invention there is also used a non-cereal starch material such as potato starch or manioc starch. When subjected to the various treatments which are described here after, such non-cereal starch material provides the desired smoothness, thickness and stability of the fermented material.

Relative proportions of cereal flour and non-cereal starch material will greatly depend on the nature and quality of the final product to mix with. It is the task of the man in the art to select the most appropriate kinds of ingredients and their relative proportions to reach the desired effect in most cases this can be done based on routine trials.

The gelatinization of the selected flour cereal and noncereal starch material can be effected according to the conventional techniques, steam heating e.g. Homogenization of the gelatinized mixture is preferably carried out using wet-milling devices.

According to the invention the homogenized starch and cereal material is then subjected to a fermentation making use of specific acidifying strains or mixture of strains, more particularly strains selected from various *Lactobacillus* species or *Streptococcus thermophilus*, or even *Bifidobacterium* species.

As *Lactobacillus* species useful in accordance with the invention one can use conveniently strains selected from *L. acidophilus*, *L. casei*, *L. plantarum*, *L. delbrueckii*, *L. brevis*, *L. pentosus*, *L. mesenteroides* and *L. bulgaricus*.

If it is desired, mixtures of two distinct *Lactobacillus* species can also be used, for example *L. plantarum* and *L. casei*, or even two distinct subspecies of the same *Lactobacillus* species such as *L. plantarum* e.g.

The fermentation can also be performed using one *Lactobacillus* species, *L. Casei* for example, together with one or several non-*Lactobacillus* species such as *Streptococcus thermophilus* or a *Bifidobacterium* species.

Bifidobacterium bifidus species proved very convenient in the preparation of infant food based on fruit material, when combined with specific *Lactobacillus* species. Several mixtures of various strains are disclosed as preferred mixtures in the examples provided here after.

As various strains or mixtures of strains can behave differently during fermentation and then lead to a wide range of distinct final fermented materials, the man in the art will have to select them in view of the goal to achieve. This selection would obviously depend on the kind of material to replace, the taste, the acidity or the sweetness one wishes to maintain in the final food product, or the viscosity for example.

According to the invention the fermentation process can be performed using conventional techniques. It will be carried out over a period and within a temperature range suitable to keep the selected strains active and in such a way to achieve a well controlled pH value of the fermented material. Final pH of said fermented material is indeed one of the critical parameters of the composition of the invention depending on the final use which is intended for : replacing fermented milk products or fruit material.

Other parameters will also be controlled when considering the solid, semi-solid or liquid state of the selected foodstuff. Thus, dry matter content, taste, smell or colour will further condition appropriate use of the fermented cereal based material

Preferred compositions used for replacing either fermented milk products or fruit material, or both, in solid or semi-solid foodstuffs can be characterized as having a pH of about 3.8 to 4.0 and further characterized by a dry matter content of about 12 to 16 weight %, a total acidity of about 0.42 to 0.49 weight % expressed as lactic acid content and a consistency of about 13 to 17 cm/15 s at 20 °C.

An other preferred composition useful for analogous purpose can be characterized as having a pH of about 4.0 to 4.2 and further characterized by a dry matter content of about 12 to 16 weight %, a total acidity of about 0.32 to 0.37 weight % expressed as lactic acid content and a consistency of about 8 to 14 cm/15 s at 20 °C.

Considering replacing fermented milk products and/or fruit material in liquid foodstuffs one can propose as preferred composition a cereal based fermented material having a pH of about 3.5 to 4.0 and further characterized by a dry matter content of about 6 to 8 weight %, a total acidity of about 0.21 to 0.44 weight % expressed as lactic acid content and a consistency of about 18 to 25 cm/15 s at 20 °C.

The fermented material which is referred to hereabove has the further advantage not to alter the initial taste and flavour of the food products. Its mild acidity matches quite well with that of fermented milk products; moreover, it has been observed that it does not impart any "floury" or "cooked cereal" taste or like to said food products, even if present in significant proportions.

Again, it will be the task of the man in the art to determine more precisely the organoleptic quality as well as the proportions of fermented material to use for reducing the content of fermented milk products e.g., and to what extent such a reduction can be done to afford food products still acceptable for the consumers.

- 5 The following examples only represent an illustration of the present invention but in no way any restriction of same. Temperatures are given in degrees Celsius and proportions in weight percent.

Example 1

10 Preparation of a fermented material suitable for chilled products

a) Inoculum

- 15 A culture medium for a mixture of Lactobacillus and Streptococcus strains was prepared using the following ingredients (parts by weight) :

rice flour	112
manioc starch	24
wheat flour	15
sucrose	7
skimmed milk powder	7
yeast extract*	7
distilled water	750

25 * (DIFCO-0881-01-3)

the above mixture being first gelatinized by steam heating, then milled, cooled at room temperature and finally diluted such to have a dry matter content of about 10 %.

- 30 Inoculation was effected separately with Lactobacillus strains defined hereafter, according to the standard technique, at a rate of 1% (weight) :

Lactobacillus plantarum (ATCC 8041)	0.5
Lactobacillus plantarum**	1.0
Lactobacillus casei (ATCC 393)	1.0

35 ** FLORAPAN L-73 of C. Hansen's Laboratories

- 40 and then incubated up to achievement of the desired growth rate : 10^8 to 10^9 colony forming units per gram of inoculum: final pH 3.5 to 4.1. The separate inoculums were finally combined in a way to achieve the relative proportions defined hereabove.

b) Fermentation

- 45 The following ingredients were mixed in a container suitable for heat treatment (parts expressed in kilograms):

rice flour	112
manioc starch	24
wheat flour	15
sucrose	7
skimmed milk powder	7
yeast extract	1
water	750

- 55 The above mixture was then injected with steam up to get a temperature of 135 ° C and further kept at that temperature for 2 min., then mechanically homogenized and finally cooled at approx. 32 ° C.

The resulting slurry was then transferred into a fermentation tank, then inoculated with the mixture of strains referred to here above at a rate of 1.25 % of liquid inoculum per weight of slurry, and further added with sodium citrate at a rate of 0.04 % weight.

The fermentation took place at 32 °C for 8 hours affording to an acidic amylaceous fermented material which was characterized as follows: pH 3.8-4.0; total acidic content 0.42-0.49 % (expressed as weight of lactic acid); dry matter content 14-15 % (weight) and consistency of 13 cm/15 s. at 20 °C as defined hereafter. The thus afforded material is a white translucent paste having a smooth structure.

"Consistency" measurement provides a characteristic value of this kind of material which may be compared to the flowing rate of the liquid or semi-liquid material. It consists to measure the unidirectional horizontal move of a sample of material per time unit, in the present case in cm. per 15 s. period (at 20 °C e.g.).

The fermented material is particularly suitable for the preparation of chilled products such as yoghurts, fruit desserts, fresh cheese desserts, fruit mousses e.g. It can be stored under 10 °C up to 7 days before using or pasteurized for longterm storage.

Example 2

Preparation of a fermented material suitable for infant food

a) Inoculum

A culture medium for a mixture of Lactobacillus and Streptococcus strains was prepared using the following ingredients (parts by weight) :

rice flour	150
skimmed milk powder	70
sucrose	50
calcium monophosphate	2
yeast extract*	40
alpha-amylase	0.2
distilled water	1000

*DIFCO 0127-01-7

and subjecting the above mixture to sterilization at approx. 120 °C for 15 min.

After cooling, separate portions of the above culture medium were inoculated at a rate of 1 % (weight) with the mixture of strains defined here below:

Streptococcus thermophilus (CNCM I-1383)	0.5
Lactobacillus casei (ATCC 393)	1.0
Bifidobacterium bifidus (ATCC 29521)	1.0

and then incubated up to achievement of the desired growth rate: 10^8 to 10^9 colony forming units per gram of inoculum: final pH 4.2. The separate inoculums were finally combined in a way to achieve the relative proportions defined hereabove.

b) Fermentation

The following ingredients were mixed in a container suitable for heat treatment (parts expressed in kilograms):

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rice flour	114
manioc starch	25
wheat flour	15
sucrose	7
skimmed milk powder	7
yeast extract	1.5
water	750

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10 The above mixture was then injected with steam up to get a temperature of 135 °C and further kept at that temperature for 2 min., then mechanically homogenized and finally cooled at approx. 35 °C. The resulting slurry was then transferred into a fermented tank, then inoculated with the mixture of strains referred to here above, at a rate of 2.5% of liquid inoculum per weight of slurry, and further added with sodium citrate at a rate of 0.04% weight.

15 The fermentation took place at 35 °C for 8 hours affording to an acidic amylaceous fermented material which was characterized as follows: pH 4.0-4.2; total acidic content 0.32-0.37% (expressed as weight of lactic acid); dry matter content 15 to 16% (weight) and consistency of 10-12 cm/15 s. at 20 °C as defined here above. The thus afforded material is a white translucent paste having a smooth structure.

20 The fermented material is particularly suitable for the preparation of various infant foods such as fruit compote, fresh cheese desserts e.g. It can be stored under 10 °C up to 1 week or pasteurized before using.

Example 3

Preparation of a fermented material suitable for beverages

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The following ingredients were mixed in a container suitable for heat treatment (parts expressed in kilograms):

rice flour	19.8
wheat flour	15.0
oats flakes	13.9
sucrose	24.3
yeast extract	1.5
water	850.0

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The above mixture was then injected with steam up to get a temperature of 130 °C and further kept at that temperature for 1 min., and finally cooled at approx. 32 °C.

40 The resulting slurry was then transferred into a fermentation tank, then inoculated with the mixture of strains referred to in Example 1 at a rate of 1.25% of liquid inoculum per weight of slurry, and further added with sodium citrate at a rate of 0.04% weight.

45 The fermentation took place at 32 °C for 8 hours affording to an acidic amylaceous fermented material which was characterized as follows: pH 3.5-3.8; total acidic content 0.35-0.38% (expressed as weight of lactic acid); dry matter content 6.7% (weight) and consistency of 23 cm/15 s. at 20 °C as defined here above.

The fermented material is a light brown translucent liquid with small particles visible. It can be stored up to 1 week under 4 °C before using or pasteurized for long term storage.

Example 4

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Preparation of a yoghurt/fruit dessert

The following ingredients were used as briefly described here below, applying the conventional techniques.

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	Ingredients	Weight percentage
I)	Fermented material according to Example 1	40
	peach preserves	16.0
	sucrose	4.0
	food grade gelatine	0.2
II)	commercial natural yoghurt	39.8

Preparation : mixing I and heat in a water bath up to 70°C. Cool down to 20°C and add II, mix thoroughly and keep refrigerated.

Example 5

Preparation of a fruit (maracuya) mousse

The following ingredients were used as briefly described here below, applying the conventional techniques.

	Ingredients	Weight percentage
I)	maracuya pulp (single strength)	18.333
	sucrose	8.333
	food grade gelatine	1.167
II)	fermented material according to Example 1	38.833
III)	sweet cream (30% fat)	13.333
IV)	fresh egg white	11.667
	sucrose	8.333

Preparation : mixing and heat to 60°C, then add II to the above mixture. Whip III until firm and add to the blend. Whip IV until firm and incorporate gently. Fill in cups, chill thoroughly and keep refrigerated.

Example 6

Preparation of an infant fruit and vegetable puree

The following ingredients were used as briefly described here below, applying the conventional techniques.

Ingredients	Weight percentage
Fermented material according to Example 2	61.151
carrot purée	25.180
apple concentrate (24° Brix)	7.194
sucrose	6.475

Preparation : mix all ingredients and blend at high speed for 1 minute.

Example 7

Preparation of a fruit/cereal beverage

The following ingredients were used as briefly described here below, applying the conventional techniques.

Ingredients	Weight percentage
Fermented material according to Example 3	76.272
strawberry pulp (6.5 ° Brix)	7.397
papaya pulp (10.4 ° Brix)	7.276
sucrose	6.791
banana purée (24 ° Brix)	2.122
salt	0.053
ascorbic acid	0.053
strawberry aroma	0.036

Preparation : wet mixing the ingredients, then pouring them to colloid milling. Pasteurizing at 102 ° C for 54 s. and fill aseptically in suitable containers.

Example 8

Preparation of a "ketchup" sauce

The following ingredients were used as briefly described here below, applying the conventional techniques.

Ingredients	Weight percentage
Fermented material according to Example 1	54.53
sugar syrup (59 ° Brix)	23.20
commercial tomato paste	19.30
salt	1.35
onion powder	0.07
allspice	0.04
food grade caramel colour	0.05
Griffith emulsion	0.02
food grade red colour	0.01
cinnamon powder	0.01
asetic acid 97%	1.00

Preparation : mix all ingredients together, then heat at 90 ° C and immediately pour into suitable bottles.

Information relating to microorganisms

1. *Streptococcus thermophilus* CNCM I-1383

Isolated from a fermented dairy product.

Morphology: diplococcus form, frequently grouped as small size chains, no tail. No spore formation observed - Gram positive microorganisms, catalase negative and facultatively anaerobic.

Fermentation of sugars: produces lactic acid from Dglucose, lactose and sucrose.

Exhibits texturizing properties through exopolysaccharides production.

Registered on December 8, 1993 in accordance with the rules of the Budapest Convention under No. I-1383 at the Collection Nationale de Cultures de Microorganismes - Institut Pasteur - 28, rue du Docteur Roux F-75724 Paris.

2. *Lactobacillus casei* ATCC 393

Disclosed as registration No. 393 on page 115 of the 1989 Catalog of the American Type Culture Collection 12301 Parklawn Drive - Rockville, Maryland 20852 USA.

3. *Lactobacillus pentosus* ATCC 8041

Disclosed as registration No. 8041 on page 118 of the 1989 Catalog of the American Type Culture Collection 12301 Parklawn Drive - Rockville, Maryland 20852 USA.

4. *Bifidobacterium bifidum* ATCC 29521

Disclosed as registration No. 29521 on page 41 of the 1989 Catalog of the American Type Culture Collection 12301 Parklawn Drive - Rockville, Maryland 20852 USA.

Claims

1. Process for reducing either simultaneously or separately the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in foodstuffs containing fermented milk products and/or fruit material, which comprises adding thereto an acidic amylaceous fermented composition resulting from a process wherein
 - a) a slurry of cereal flour and at least one additional non-cereal starch material is first subjected to gelatinization and further homogenized;
 - b) inoculated with an acidifying strain or a mixture of acidifying strains selected from *Lactobacillus* species, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and *Bifidobacterium* species;
 - c) then subjected to a fermentation over a period and at a temperature such as to afford a pH of about 3.5 to 4.2 of the fermented material; and
 - d) finally stabilized.
2. Process according to claim 1, wherein cereal flour is rice flour, wheat flour, oat flour, barley flour or any mixture thereof.
3. Process according to claims 1 and 2, wherein the non-cereal starch material is potato starch or manioc starch.
4. Process according to claims 1 to 3, wherein *Lactobacillus* species are selected from *L. acidophilus*, *L. casei*, *L. plantarum*, *L. delbrueckii*, *L. brevis*, *L. Pentosus*, *L. mesenteroides* and *L. bulgaricus*.
5. Process according to claim 4, wherein the mixture of strains contains two distinct *Lactobacillus* species, e.g. *L. plantarum* and *L. casei*.
6. Process according to claim 4, wherein the mixture of strains contains two distinct subspecies of the same *Lactobacillus* species, e.g. *L. plantarum*.
7. Process according to claims 1 to 6, wherein the mixture of strains comprises at least one *Lactobacillus* species or subspecies and a non-*Lactobacillus* species.
8. Process according to claims 1 to 7, wherein homogenization of the gelatinized slurry is carried out by wet-milling.
9. Process according to claims 1 to 8, wherein the fermented material is stabilized either by cooling, heating or sterilizing.
10. Composition useful for reducing either simultaneously or separately the content of fermented milk products and/or fruit material in foodstuffs containing fermented milk products and/or fruit material, which consists in an acidic amylaceous fermented composition resulting from a process wherein
 - a) a slurry of cereal flour and at least one additional non-cereal starch material is first subjected to gelatinization and further homogenized;
 - b) inoculated with an acidifying strain or a mixture of acidifying strains selected from *Lactobacillus* species, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and *Bifidobacterium* species;
 - c) then subjected to a fermentation over a period and at a temperature such as to afford a pH of about 3.5 to 4.2 of the fermented material ; and
 - d) finally stabilized.

11. Composition according to claim 10, having a pH of about 3.8 to 4.0 and further characterized by a dry matter content of about 12 to 16 weight %, a total acidity of about 0.42 to 0.49 weight % expressed as lactic acid content and a consistency of about 13 to 17 cm/15 s at 20 °C.
- 5 12. Composition according to claim 10, having a pH of about 4.0 to 4.2 and further characterized by a dry matter content of about 12 to 16 weight %, a total acidity of about 0.32 to 0.37 weight % expressed as lactic acid content and a consistency of about 8 to 14 cm/15 s at 20 °C.
- 10 13. Composition according to claim 12, having a pH of about 3.5 to 4.0 and further characterized by a dry matter content of about 6 to 8 weight %, a total acidity of about 0.21 to 0.44 weight % expressed as lactic acid content and a consistency of about 18 to 25 cm/15 s at 20 °C.
14. Foodstuff comprising fermented milk products and/or fruit material and a composition according to claim 10.
- 15 15. Solid or semi-solid foodstuff according to claim 14 comprising a composition according to claim 11.
16. Solid or semi-solid foodstuff comprising fermented milk products and/or fruit material and a composition according to claim 12.
- 20 17. Liquid foodstuff comprising fermented milk products and/or fruit material and a composition according to claim 13.

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 94 12 0653

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X,D	WO-A-91 17672 (H. SALOVAARA) * page 3, line 3 - line 18 * * page 5, line 34 - page 6, line 8 * * page 6, line 26 - page 7, line 31 * * example 7 * * tables 1,2 * ---	1-17	A23L1/105 A23L1/212 A23L1/214 A23C9/13 A23L1/24 A23L2/52 A23P1/16
X,D	GB-A-2 092 878 (CHIBUKU BREWERIES LTD.) * claims 14,22 * * page 1, line 76 - page 2, line 43 * * example 1 * ---	1-17	
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 12 no. 176 (C-498) ,25 May 1988 & JP-A-62 285771 (NORIO MIHARA) * abstract * -----	1-17	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			A23L
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		7 March 1995	Vuillamy, V
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			
T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons @ : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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